

Message Text

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SUBJECT: LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTION RESULTS AND OBSERVATIONS

1. TODAY'S AP WIRE SERVICE REPORT OF THE RESULTS OF THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTIONS BEGINS, "THE COMMUNISTS SUFFERED A SHARP DECLINE AT THE EXPENSE OF THE SOCIALISTS AND THE RULING CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS SCORED MINOR GAINS IN LOCAL ELECTIONS IN ITALY ON SUNDAY." MIDWAY IN THE AP STORY ONE FINDS THE STATEMENT THAT "THE FOUR PARTIES OF THE DEFUNCT CENTER-LEFT COALITION JUMPED FROM 50.6 PERCENT TO 59.4 PERCENT." AS COMFORTING AS THESE GENERALIZATIONS MAY BE TO THE AP, THEY ARE UNWARRANTED BY THE DATA BASE. THE BASICALLY LOCAL ISSUES AND PERSONALITIES INVOLVED IN ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTIONS MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO ACCEPT THESE RESULTS AS A NATIONAL

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REFERENDUM ON THE PARTIES THEMSELVES.

2. THE RESULTS OF THIS WEEK'S LOCAL ELECTIONS IN 85 DIFFERENT TOWNS ACROSS ITALY ARE FAVORABLE TO THE DEMOCRATIC CAUSE, BUT A DIRECT COMPARISON TO THE RESULTS OF THE 1976 POLITICAL ELECTIONS IS OF QUESTIONABLE VALIDITY. THE RESULTS ARE MORE WISELY MEASURED AGAINST THE MORE COMPARABLE 1972 AND 1975 ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTIONS. IN CASTELLAMARE DI STABIA, IN THE PROVINCE OF NAPLES AND THE

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LARGEST OF THE COMMUNES HAVING ELECTIONS ON THE 17TH, A COMPARISON WITH THE LAST (1972) ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTIONS SHOWS THE LOSS OF ABOUT ONE TENTH OF A PERCENTAGE POINT FOR THE PCI AND A GAIN OF NEARLY SIX PERCENT FOR THE DC. WHILE THAT SAYS VERY LITTLE ABOUT DC VERSUS PCI PROSPECTS ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL, AT THE LOCAL LEVEL IT IS A STARTLING VICTORY FOR THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS. FOR ONE THING THE CITY ADMINISTRATION, WHICH HAS BEEN "MONOCOLORE" PCI, WILL RETURN TO

THE DC.

3. AS I MENTIONED ABOVE, THE RESULTS OF THE CASTELLAMARE ELECTIONS ARE NOT NECESSARILY A REFLECTION OF THE NATIONAL POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT. I POINTED OUT AT THE ROME PRINCIPAL OFFICERS' CONFERENCE A SHORT WHILE BACK THAT RESULTS IN LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTIONS DEPEND MOST HEAVILY NOT REPEAT NOT ON IDEOLOGY, BUT ON THE PERSONAL

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REPUTATIONS OF THE POLITICIANS INVOLVED AND THEIR ABILITY TO DELIVER SMALL AND BIG FAVORS TO THEIR CLIENTELE. IN THE MEZZOGIORNO THESE SORTS OF CONCRETE INTERESTS CAN OUTWEIGH EVEN PARTY AFFILIATIONS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL. IN MY VIEW THESE ARE THE CONSIDERATIONS WHICH IN LARGE MEASURE ACCOUNT FOR THE OUTCOME OF THE ELECTIONS IN CASTELLAMARE, THE MOST CLOSELY WATCHED ELECTORAL CONTEST IN MY CONSULAR DISTRICT, AND QUITE POSSIBLY IN ROVIGO AS WELL. THIS INTEREST HAS BEEN HEIGHTENED BY A CLEAR VICTORY FOR THE DC AND A CLEAR LOSS FOR THE PCI.

4. IN CONCRETE TERMS, THE MAKE UP OF THE CASTELLAMARE COMMUNAL COUNCIL WILL CHANGE FROM A PRE-ELECTION BALANCE OF 14 PCI SEATS, 5 PSI, 2 PSDI, 1 PRI, 15 DC AND 3 MSI/DN TO A NEW COMPOSITION WHICH LEAVES THE PCI WITH 14 SEATS, INCREASES THE DC SHARE TO 17, CUTS THE PSI TO 3, MOVES THE PRI TO 3, TAKES 2 FROM THE MSI AND LEAVES THE PSDI WHERE IT WAS AT 2 SEATS. THIS SHOULD GIVE THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS CONTROL OF THE COMMUNAL ADMINISTRATION. A TABLE GIVING A MORE COMPLETE BREAKDOWN OF THE VOTE FOLLOWS AT THE END OF THIS TELEGRAM.

5. WHILE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CASTELLAMARE DI STABIA RESULTS MAY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BE MORE SYMBOLIC THAN REAL, THAT SYMBOLIC VALUE IS SIGNIFICANT.

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THE CITY WAS GOVERNED BY A MONOCOLORE PCI GIUNTA AND THEN, DURING THE CAMPAIGN, THE COMMUNISTS BROUGHT IN THEIR HEAVIEST GUNS, UP TO AND INCLUDING BERLINGUER, WITH PAJETTA TO WIND UP THE CAMPAIGN. THE DC COUNTERED WITH ANDREOTTI AND ANTONIO GAVA. ALTHOUGH THE LOCAL ISSUES AND PERSONALITIES ARE PARAMOUNT, IT IS NEVERTHELESS EMBARRASSING FOR THE PCI, AND BERLINGUER PERSONALLY, TO PULL OUT ALL THE STOPS AND STILL FAIL TO ADVANCE THE COMMUNIST CAUSE. THE PCI PROVINCIAL SECRETARY, ANDREA GEREMICCA, COMMENTING ON THE RESULTS IN A NEWSPAPER INTERVIEW, CONCEDED THAT THE RESULTS WILL REQUIRE THE PARTY TO INDULGE IN "RIGOROUS REFLECTION ON...(PCI) OPERATIONS AND ADMINISTRATION AND ON THE PARTY'S TIES WITH THE MASSES.

6. I APPEND A TABLE OF PRECISE ELECTORAL RESULTS FROM CASTELLAMARE DI STABIA WHICH MAY INTEREST WASHINGTON ANALYSTS, AT THE SAME TIME WARNING POTENTIAL ANALYSTS OF THIS MATERIAL NOT TO BE CARRIED AWAY

BY OVERENTHUSIASM; AND SECOND, TO PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THAT A SMALL ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTION IN 1977 IS NOT RPT NOT DIRECTLY COMPARABLE TO A NATIONWIDE POLITICAL ELECTION IN 1976. TABLE FOLLOWS:

	LOCAL 1977	LOCAL 1972-5	POLITICAL 1976
PARTY	VOTES	S VOTES	S VOTES
PCI	14.271 33.0 14	12.831 33.4 14	20.305 45.8

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PDUP	-----	475	1.1
PSI	3.852 8.9 3	4.937 13.0 5	3.070 6.9
PSDI	2.199 5.1 2	2.376 6.2 2	796 1.8
PRI	2.921 6.8 3	1.586 4.1 1	1.296 2.9
DC	17.297 40.1 17	13.130 34.2 15	14.531 32.8
PLI	151 0.3 --	875 2.3 --	227 0.5
MSI	1.676 3.9 1	2.633 6.9 3	3.265 7.4

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P.R.	-----	334	0.8
D.N.	806 1.9 -----		
TOTAL	43.173	40 38.428	40 44.299 --

SEATS

7. A FURTHER ITEM OF POSSIBLE INTEREST IS THE FOLLOWING TABLE
HIGH CONTRASTS THE RESULTS OF THE 1972 AND THIS WEEK'S ADMINISTRATIVE
ELECTIONS IN THE COMMUNES VOTING ARE SUNDAY. THE TABLE WAS TAKEN
FROM A TV NEWS BROADCAST. THE TABLE SHOWS HOW SEATS ON THE VARIOUS
COMMUNAL COUNCILS HAVE CHANGED HANDS AMONG THE MORE IMPORTANT PARTIES

	1977	SEATS	CHANGE	1972-75	SEATS
DC	39.9	209	4	36.6	205
PCI	28.8	146	11	28.2	135
PSI	14.1	75	-4	15.5	79

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MSI/DN	5.1	22	-11	6.9	33
PSDI	3.7	15	-1	4.3	14
PLI	0.3	0		1.0	0
PRI	2.4	7	6	1.1	1

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Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
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Disposition Remarks:
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